

FRANCE.

Herald Special Report from Versailles.

A Feu d'Enfer from the French on Christmas Eve.

German Batteries Ready for a Terrific Bombardment.

The Most Startling Drama of the War Opened.

BONDY OCCUPIED BY THE SAXON TROOPS.

Twelve Thousand Parisian Volunteers Swear to Cut through the Investing Line.

Skirmishes at Bolbec and Chateau Robert, Near Havre.

French Success Near Vendome—Chauzy Advancing.

Faidherbe Again Moving Upon Manteuffel.

THE BESIEGED CAPITAL.

TELEGRAM TO THE NEW YORK HERALD.

Severe fire from the French forts—Range of the French guns—The German semicircle of batteries—Chances of shelling Paris—Position of the works—The ball opened.

LONDON, Jan. 1, 1871.

I have received from the New York Herald correspondent at Versailles a letter, dated December 27, giving an account of the operations before Paris to that date. Your correspondent writes:—

SEVERE FIRE FROM THE FRENCH FORTS.

Christmas Eve was rendered memorable by one of the severest bombardments from the French forts which the German investing army has been called upon to sustain since the siege began. The French opened a veritable feu d'enfer about midnight. It soon after ceased, however, and the remainder of the night was undisturbed save by an occasional shot only. Christmas day was passed in quiet till about two o'clock in the afternoon, when the French forts suddenly fired a volley and then relapsed into silence. On the part of the Germans there was no reply to the cannonade. The investing army preserved its wonted silence and made no sign which could indicate where the heavy guns are. I would state, however, that the German siege guns are now fully in position and prepared to attack the forts.

RANGE OF THE FRENCH GUNS.

The weather is and has been so intensely cold that it makes the sound of the French guns sharper and more distinct than usual. This state of the atmosphere also aids in creating the belief that the guns have a longer range than they have yet reached, but such is not the case altogether. It is certain, however, that the guns of Fort Mont Valerien have thrown solid shot into the bank of the Seine, below the terrace of St. Germain, west of the fort, and a distance of over six miles.

EVERYTHING READY FOR THE BOMBARDMENT.

I may now state, without fear of the information being regarded as premature, that everything is in readiness for the bombardment of Paris on the most terrific scale conceivable. All the German batteries are complete, guns mounted and ammunition in sufficient quantity. They will open simultaneously upon the devoted city from the following points, the whole length of the lines forming a semicircle.

THE GERMAN SEMICIRCLE OF BATTERIES.

Beginning at a point on the heights above St. Denis, and consequently north of Paris, the German semicircle of batteries extend in a south-west direction to the town of Argenteuil, on the northern bank of the river opposite the peninsula on which Fort Mont Valerien stands. The line then continues across the river to Colombes, nearly opposite Gennevilliers, whence it continues in a southerly direction to Garches (R), opposite Fort Mont Valerien. It then takes a southeast course, passing between St. Cloud and Versailles to the heights of Meudon, where it faces the southern fortresses of Paris. The batteries have now a shorter range. From Meudon, which is opposite Fort Issy, the line extends eastward to Clamart, opposite Fort Vanvres, thence to Fontenay aux Roses, opposite Fort Montrouge, and continues eastward opposite Forts Bietre, Ivry and Charenton, turning at the peninsula of St. Maurice, the scene of Ducrot's late sortie, and runs in a northward direction, opposite Forts Nogent and Rosny.

THE CHANCES OF SHELLING PARIS FROM THE WEST.

It may be safely asserted that there is little chance of the German batteries west and north of Paris shelling the city. The distance from the ramparts is too great. St. Denis, on the north, is covered by two forts—Double Couronne and Nord and La Briche—situated about three-quarters of a mile from each other and not less than three miles from the walls of the city, the total distances from the German batteries on the heights opposite St. Denis, at Argenteuil and at Colombes being over six miles. Passing over the French earthworks on the peninsula of Gennevilliers, which must sustain the first fire of the German guns at Colombes, we reach Fort Mont Valerien, nearly eight miles southwest of St. Denis and two and a half miles distant from the ramparts. Confronting this fort the German batteries are over four miles from the city.

THE PROSPECT FROM THE SOUTH.

Thus far it will be seen that, even if a few shells could reach Paris from the batteries mentioned, they could not materially damage the city. On the south, however, the prospect is more favorable to the Germans. Six detached fortresses defend this part of Paris. These are Fort Issy, four miles south-east of Valerien and one mile and a quarter from the ramparts; Fort Vanvres, two miles and a half east of Issy and one mile and a quarter from the ramparts; Fort Montrouge, a mile and a half from Vanvres and something less than a mile from the city. This fort, together with Fort Bietre, about three-quarters of a mile from the bastions, are nearer to the city walls than any

of the others. There are two more forts on the south of Paris—Ivry, a little less than a mile and a half from the ramparts, and Charenton, situated near the junction of the Marne and Seine, nearly two miles distant. Opposite this line of forts the German batteries begin at Meudon, some two miles and a half from the ramparts, thence in a zigzag line, with a distance ranging from two miles and a half to four miles. At Meudon and Clamart, however, the German batteries are nearer to Paris than at any other point.

THE BATTERIES ON THE EAST.

On the east the same difficulties of shelling Paris will be encountered as on the west. Fort Nogent is three miles distant from the ramparts and Fort Rosny very much the same. The German guns must, consequently, have a range of fully five miles to shell the city from opposite these forts. Further north the three remaining forts—Noisy (two miles), Romainville (three quarters of a mile), and Aubervilliers (about one mile and a quarter)—are near enough to the bastions, but extensive outworks, a greater distance off, cover these and afford additional protection to the capital.

THE BALL OPENED.

Nevertheless, that Paris will be shelled is certain, from the south, as soon as the bombardment begins, and from all the other points as fast as the Germans finish their parallels. The bombardment of Fort Mont Valerien and its subsequent abandonment by the French were simply a prelude to the most startling drama of the war. Everything in Versailles indicates that great events are near at hand. Except the attaches there are no officers visible at the present moment. All are gone to the front to participate in the operations. I may safely say that the ball has opened already, as the German field artillery has commenced firing upon the French outposts for the purpose of driving them in.

Captures in Mont Avron—Bondy Occupied.

VERSAILLES, Dec. 30, 1870.

Great quantities of munitions of war were found abandoned in Fort Avron. Two companies of Saxons have advanced as far as the village of Bondy.

FRENCH REPORTS.

TELEGRAM TO THE NEW YORK HERALD.

German losses before Avron—Particulars about the fort—A silly invention—Reinforcements—A desperate corps.

BORDEAUX, Jan. 1, 1871.

The losses of the besieging forces during the bombardment of Fort Avron, on the 28th, are reported to have been 8,000.

PARTICULARS ABOUT MONT AVRON.

It is officially explained that the fort on Mont Avron was not casemated. As the men had no protection General Trochu ordered them to remove the guns and evacuate the works. The fort was not injured by the incessant firing of the Germans, and its garrison lost only eight killed and twenty wounded during the three days' bombardment.

A SILLY INVENTION.

The despatch to the London Times, reporting that Trochu was forming an intrenched camp around Mont Valerien, with the intention of withdrawing his army into it and evacuating Paris, is pronounced a silly invention.

GERMAN REINFORCEMENTS.

Advices from Paris of the 29th represent that the larger portion of the army of Prince Frederick Charles has reached the lines of the besiegers of Paris, and joined them as reinforcements.

A DESPERATE CORPS.

It is reported that Beaupre has formed in Paris a corps of 12,000 volunteers who have sworn to cut their way through the Prussian lines and organize a levy in the provinces.

THE MOVEMENT ON HAVRE.

TELEGRAM TO THE NEW YORK HERALD.

A Warlike Proclamation—Skirmish near Bolbec—French success at Chateau Robert—German account of the affair.

LONDON, Jan. 1, 1871.

A Havre despatch of to-day's date states that General Pelletier has issued a proclamation addressed to the army and people of Havre filled with warlike exhortations and encouragement.

SKIRMISH NEAR BOLBEC.

A reconnaissance in force was made to-day in the direction of Bolbec. There was some fighting with the German advanced posts, in which the French lost one killed, and the Germans twenty-five killed, eighteen wounded and eleven prisoners.

FRENCH SUCCESS NEAR CHATEAU ROBERT.

A despatch from Havre dated Saturday evening states that General Roy carried the Prussian positions on the heights of Bouille, Orival and Chateau Robert. The affair lasted six hours. The loss was small on both sides.

GERMAN REPORT OF THE AFFAIR.

General Manteuffel reports that on Saturday five battalions left Rouen. They encountered a French brigade and drove it into the Castle of Robert le Diable, which was subsequently stormed by the Prussians. The French loss was 100 killed and prisoners.

FURTHER PARTICULARS—GERMANS CHARGED WITH TREACHERY.

Further accounts from Havre admit that the Prussians retook and held Bouille for a short time, but were afterwards driven back with considerable loss.

The French assert that the Prussians at one time offered to surrender, whereupon the French fire ceased. But as a party approached the enemy to receive their surrender it was fired into at point blank range, and the battle was resumed.

THE ARMY OF THE LOIRE.

TELEGRAM TO THE NEW YORK HERALD.

Means Bombarded—Germans Falling Back—Engagement near Briouze—A question of veracity.

LONDON, Jan. 1, 1871.

The siege artillery arrived before Meunay yesterday, and the bombardment of the place has commenced.

GERMANS FALLING BACK.

A Bordeaux telegram of December 31 states that the columns sent forward by General Chauzy report that the Prussians are falling back on Paris.

ENGAGEMENT NEAR BRIOUZE.

In an engagement near Briouze yesterday, says a Bordeaux despatch of the 31st, a French detachment gained a victory over 2,500 Germans.

A QUESTION OF VERACITY.

The *Moniteur*, of Bordeaux, says:—The despatch emanating from Prussian hands and reporting that the city of Tours asked for a Prussian garrison is an absurd falsehood.

A FRENCH VICTORY NEAR VENDOME.

A telegram from Bordeaux, dated to-day, reports that an official despatch from Le Mans to-day has been received, in which General Chauzy announces

that General Jouffroy attacked the enemy on the left bank of the Loire, near Vendome, and completely defeated him, taking 200 prisoners. General Chauzy adds that he will energetically follow up the success and continue the forward movement.

OPERATIONS IN THE NORTH.

TELEGRAM TO THE NEW YORK HERALD.

Faidherbe Advancing—Defeat of Gardes Mobile.

LONDON, Jan. 1, 1871.

A Bordeaux telegram of the 31st ult. reports that General Faidherbe, commanding the Army of the North, is again in motion.

GARDES MOBILE DEFEATED AT FOGNET.

A despatch from Albert, dated December 30, states that a flying column of General Manteuffel's army encountered and defeated three battalions of Gardes Mobile at Fognat with much loss, taking ten officers and 230 men prisoners.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS.

TELEGRAM TO THE NEW YORK HERALD.

A Battle Expected Near Heri-court—German Cavalry Useless—Native Reserved Provisions.

LONDON, Jan. 1, 1871.

A Bordeaux despatch states that in the East the Prussians continue to retreat before the French advance.

AN EXPECTED BATTLE.

A battle is expected in Eastern France, near Hericourt, between General Trechow and 10,000 Frenchmen.

POPULAR MANIFESTATION IN BORDEAUX.

A despatch from Bordeaux, dated to-day, states that great masses of people made demonstrations in favor of the government here to-day. For hours the streets near the Prefecture were impassable. M. Gambetta addressed the crowd from a balcony. The popular enthusiasm was intense.

GERMAN CAVALRY USELESS.

It is reported from French sources that the Prussian cavalry has become almost useless since the recent snows and frost, as the horses are smooth-shod.

EATING RESERVED PROVISIONS.

A Bordeaux telegram states that, in consequence of the severe weather and the difficulty of keeping their communications open, the Prussians around Paris have been obliged to eat their reserved provisions.

GERMANY.

Herald Special Report of the General Situation in the Country.

Germany Feeling the Effects of the War—Disatisfaction Prevalent—War Enthusiasm Dead—The Visit to King William Pro-mature—Railroad Destroyed—Correspondents Oppressed—Germany Looking After Asia.

TELEGRAM TO THE NEW YORK HERALD.

LONDON, Jan. 1, 1871.

I have received the following letter from the New York Herald correspondent at Berlin, dated December 29, and forward it specially for the Herald. Your correspondent writes:—

FEELING THE EFFECTS OF WAR.

When, weeks ago, Christmas was named as the period at which the war would end no one doubted its realization, and yet the festival has passed over and still the war is waged to the knife. The consequences are observable in every direction; trade and industry are crippled, and the children are deprived of their customary amusements of the season. The Prussians are now sending to the front the landwehr of the second band, aged forty-two and forty-three years.

DISSATISFACTION IN GERMANY.

It is considered that the utmost effort of which Germany is capable of making is being made. Though the system of supplying the vast army is admitted to be admirable, it cannot obviate the dissatisfaction and distrust which exist in considerable sections of territory. Notwithstanding the official statements concerning the victualing and clothing of troops, the popular instinct appreciates the difficulty of the situation in its proper light.

WAR ENTHUSIASM DEAD.

Although no sign of discouragement is perceptible the former enthusiasm has ceased to exist, and a strong desire for peace is expressed. A rose-color tint is given to all official accounts, so that only from private sources do we learn that the hospitals around Versailles contain 8,000 sick and wounded.

A PREMATURE VISIT.

The visit of the delegation of the Reichstag to Versailles it is now admitted was premature. They received an indefinite reply from the King. The threatening aspect of the Luxembourg question had somewhat diminished, when the difficulties with Switzerland arose, the Germans demanding the strictest neutrality.

RAILROAD DESTROYED.

The Germans have destroyed the railroad from St. Louis to Basle, and have stopped all traffic with the frontier.

OPPRESSION OF CORRESPONDENTS.

The oppression of the correspondents of the various journals is worse than ever, and the least complaint on their part is visited by wholesale confiscation. General Falkenstein has made a clean sweep of the Danish newspapers found in his coast district.

GERMANY LOOKING AFTER ASIA.

A project to acquire an Asiatic marine station at Saigon, on the south coast of Annam, met with little favor at first from the Reichstag; now, however, the question is to be reconsidered. The acquisition of the post is supported by the Bremen and Hamburg shipping interests. Saigon and its environs are now conceded to be healthy, and it is proposed to place the garrison, which consists of Siamese troops, under the command of German officers. The latest news from Saigon is, that the French Governor of Cochinchina, by an order of the Queen, has given notice to all Frenchmen to quit the place forthwith.

ENGLAND.

Reasons for the Postponement of the Conference.

LONDON, Jan. 1, 1871.

The Foreign Office announces that the Conference of the European Powers has been postponed a few days to await the arrival of M. Jules Favre and allow the other plenipotentiaries to receive further instructions.

The Prospective Changes in the Cabinet—The Marquis of Hartington's New Post.

LONDON, Jan. 1, 1871.

The report seems to be generally credited that Mr. Chamberlain will succeed John Bright as President of the Board of Trade, the Marquis of Hartington will become Secretary for Ireland and Mr. Stanfield replace the Marquis as Postmaster General.

IRELAND.

More Supplies for France—A Vessel Off the Irish Coast.

QUEENSTOWN, Jan. 1, 1871.

A French vessel from an American port, laden with arms, is in this harbor, and is carefully watched by the German corvette *Augusta*.

NAPOLEON.

Winter at Wilhelmshöhe and Every Day Life of the Royal Exile.

His Ex-Majesty as a Skatist and Skilful on the "Runners."

Bazaine Out of Favor and His Defence.

Bonaparte's Review of the War—Imperial Counterblast to the Committee of National Defence.

GAMBETTA'S GROUNDLESS CLAIMS.

After Paris Capitulates and a Plan of Peace.

TELEGRAM TO THE NEW YORK HERALD.

LONDON, Jan. 1, 1871.

I have received a most interesting telegraph letter from the Herald special correspondent at Wilhelmshöhe, which I proceed to forward to New York by cable despatch, as follows.

The Herald special writer dates at the castle prison of his Majesty Napoleon the Third on the 29th of December. He says:—

THE WEATHER.

The most severe winter weather which has been experienced during many years in this neighborhood now prevails. The extreme cold interferes with the out-door exercise and amusements of Napoleon considerably.

VISITORS AND MYSTERY.

His Majesty is consoled, however, by the presence of a number of visitors. The party at the castle during the past week included Count Bouville, formerly Prefect of Bordeaux. This gentleman has been here for two days. He is accompanied by a certain mysterious person who is said to be an attaché of the English embassy in Berlin and also by a certain Mr. Frost. Both of these personages have had audience and very prolonged interviews with the dethroned monarch of France.

Rumor attributes to Mr. Frost the duty of discharging a secret mission, which has been confided to him by the Prussian government, to Napoleon, in which he stated the views of Bismarck and King William, relative to a parliamentary convocation of the French Legislative councils and the representative body of Germany for the purpose, it is alleged, of international debate toward a settlement of the war issues and the completion of peace.

OUTDOOR LIFE OF THE EX-EMPEROR.

Notwithstanding the prevalence of the very severe weather, to which I refer, and the drift of a heavy snow storm, the Emperor goes out every day for exercise, either on foot or riding in the saddle or in a carriage.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT FROM QUEEN AUGUSTA.

At Christmas several very handsome sleighs arrived at the Castle from Berlin. The vehicles were forwarded by special order of her Majesty Queen Augusta of Prussia for the use of the Emperor, the Queen making a special request that he should accept them.

IMPERIAL THANKS.

After accepting of the sleighs Napoleon requested Herr von Artelt, Chief of the Royal Household of Prussia, to forward his acknowledgments of profound thanks to the royal lady the Queen.

SKATING, NOT SLEIGHING.

The sleighs have not been used by Napoleon yet. His ex-Majesty has enjoyed the amusement which is afforded by brisk and most excellent skating on two different occasions just lately.

GOOD ON THE "RUNNERS."

I can assure the readers of the Herald, from my own personal observation of his performance on the ice, that, although Bonaparte is not quite equal to Jack Hares in agility and skill as a skater, he is still an admirable master of the art, taking every member of a large party who witnessed his efforts by real surprise at their success.

BAZAINE'S RELATIONS TO THE ROYAL EXILE.

Judging from the degree of cordiality which was evinced by Napoleon towards Marshal Bazaine on the occasion of his first reception at Wilhelmshöhe, it was anticipated here that that officer would be a frequent visitor at the Castle subsequently.

Such has not been the case, however. Nor is this lack of feeling or decrease of friendship, if I may call it so, attributable in any way to a late joyous increase in the number of the family of the Marshal and Mme. Bazaine by the birth of a very fine boy, or the attractions of his own very snug quarters in the vicinity of Wilhelmshöhe during the very severe weather.

The truth and fact is that only a few (and these of a very ceremonious character), visits have been made by the Marshal to the Emperor.

It appears as if the confidence which Napoleon had evidently accorded to and bestowed on Bazaine at first, after his surrender, has been, for some cause or other, withdrawn.

WHY AND WHEREFORE.

This change of feeling and respect to and of the French soldier is, probably, due to the receipt of certain facts which have been communicated to his royal master through the Empress Eugenie respecting aspirations which are said to be entertained on the part of Bazaine, and the knowledge of which could not fail to displease the Emperor, even to place him on his guard with respect to his consultation on grave subjects of State with this officer.

DEFENCE.

I can say, however, on the authority of language taken from the Marshal's own lips, that his conscience is entirely clear of any cause for such suspicion. The Marshal's course has been guided by the strictest probity and loyalty. He courts the most complete examination and scrutiny both of his career and conduct.

"HIS HIGHNESS" PHYSICIAN.

While employed in writing my despatch for the Herald I am informed of the arrival of Dr. Conneau, the Emperor's physician, at Wilhelmshöhe. It is true that the doctor has gone from the castle and returned frequently since the moment when Napoleon first entered it, but the advent of any new comer at the royal residence produces a flutter of excitement.

WHAT IS SAID OF THE WAR—FRANCE AS IT IS.

The dreary hours of the lengthened winter even-ings and dull winter nights naturally lower the

imperial party, when collected round the parlor hearth, to comment extensively and very freely on the all-absorbing topic of the situation which exists in France. In the endeavor to "pass time," speculations and opinions from the aristocratic Bonaparte point of view are hazarded and delivered with an entire freedom from restraint.

NAPOLEON'S OPINION.

During the quiet Cabinet meetings the Emperor Napoleon accustomed to express his sentiment unreservedly.

I will give the Herald the substance of his remarks made on a recent occasion, although I do not pretend to say that I have myself taken the words as they came from his tongue. The pith of his utterance was as follows:—No one can deny but that the recent development of power which has been made by sorely-pressed France in stamping new armies out of the very ground, as it were, has astonished the world. People in some quarters appear to think that it is all due to the organizing genius of M. Gambetta that the French armies of the Loire and of the Northwest have been raised, and that the ample provisioning of Paris is entirely due to the foresight of the members of the Committee of National Defence. Both suppositions are entirely erroneous. Those who entertain them as fact are entirely mistaken. A time will come when documents will be published which will show most conclusively that these very armies were called into life by General Palaiok. The formation of their cadres existed as early as the 4th of September. They would have been ready for action in the field at a much earlier day had Gambetta not obstinately overruled the plans which were laid down by Palaiok, and to the adoption of which he was ultimately compelled to return.

PARIS PROVISIONED.

Paris was victualled by the late minister of Commerce, Clement Duvivier. It will be shown after the surrender of the city by the publication of the original contracts for the provisions that such was really the case.

MILITARY DEFEATS.

Besides wherein consists, during the past three months, the oft-boasted merits of the same Committee of National Defence? Strasbourg, Phalsbourg, Toul and Montmedy capitulated, as did the Army of the Rhine, after being left without succor at Metz. Dijon, Rouen, Amiens and Orleans have been occupied by the enemy.

Paris is invested by the Prussians. Forty of the departments of France have fallen into the hands of the enemy to-day, while on the fourth day of September he had invaded but five. Upwards of one hundred thousand men, sons of France, not including those of Bazaine's army, have been lost by death or made prisoners.

MAY HAVE DONE AS WELL.

If this, sir, sums up all the achievements of the Committee of Defence of France, could not the regency which I established have done at least as well and as much?

THE BOMBARDMENT DELAY.

The main cause of the delay which has taken place in the bombardment of Paris is attributable to the act of cutting the dams of the Eastern canal, by order of the late (imperial) Minister of Public Works, the night of the 30th of August, who foresaw that the Prussians must advance toward the city in that direction. Indeed, a great number of French guns were already then on the Rhine-Marne Canal, in pursuance of his programme and order.

PLANS OF PEACE.

The Herald special writer at Wilhelmshöhe remarks, in conclusion:—It is believed probable here that after the capitulation of Paris the decree of the Regency convening the Legislative Chambers will be issued by the victors and a plebiscite be taken on the question of a further continuance of the war or the conclusion of peace. As an immense majority of the French representatives are in favor of peace this plan may afford the basis for the completion of an understanding between France and Prussia. The greatest difficulty in the way of its realization is anticipated in the few departments of the country in which there is a republican majority, and where it is a very difficult task indeed to uphold the purity of the ballot box.

INGRATITUDE AND DEBT.

The vituperative utterances of the *Independence* *Bleue* against Napoleon are attributed at Wilhelmshöhe to the inspiration of General Confiarres, who is, it is said, under very heavy pecuniary obligations to his Majesty.

NEW YEAR'S.

The Second Day of the Festival.

From time immemorial New Yorkers, who are a homely people and love their own fireworks, have been in the habit of "going round, saying their things and taking tea" (or something stronger and more exhilarating with their friends on New Year's Day. The custom originated with our ancestors of the original Dutch Knickerbocker order, when the metropolis was the village of New Amsterdam. In those days the "something stronger" was Old T—on gin, and the people who then imbibed it transmitted to their posterity such a "tender link" for it that they have ever since followed their pious example. Even the descendants of Anneke Jans, apostates to the Trinity corporation though they may be, have clung to this one institution of former days.

But a new people and new customs have intruded